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## **COVID-19 LEAVES UK EVENT INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS ON KNIFE EDGE**

Some 60% of the UK's event industry's supplier base is facing collapse within three months, unless event businesses receive further support from the Government, according to an on-line survey carried out by the Events Industry Forum (EIF) and Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP) and co-ordinated by the Production Services Association (PSA) between 3-7<sup>th</sup> April, 2020. 6% of those businesses say they are unlikely to survive until the end of April!

In all 1,490 businesses took part in the survey from across all sectors of the UK events industry.

The collapse of so many businesses would both impact the economy and result in unemployment for hundreds of thousands of people who work in the industry. According to a study by Bournemouth University last year the outdoor event industry alone employs just under 600,000 people. Over 115,000 are estimated to work in the conference, exhibitions and indoor events sectors.

Many of those working in the outdoor industry are freelancers or self-employed who rely on the summer season for the bulk of their income. With most events this summer already cancelled, from Glastonbury and Edinburgh Festival to agricultural shows, many are facing a bleak 12 months before they will see further income, which could put more in jeopardy over the winter.

Similar circumstances exist within the business events sector where 74% of all conferences and exhibitions have been postponed to the last quarter of 2020 and the remainder cancelled altogether.

Despite the Chancellor of the Exchequer indicating in the House of Commons recently that event organisers and the supply network behind them should be eligible for leisure and hospitality business support grants, according to the survey most who have applied have been turned down by local authorities who are running the scheme. Similarly, only 1% of respondents have been successful in applying for the Government backed Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

The supply line is vital to the continuity of the Industry, including contractors responsible for staging, temporary seating and structures, production lighting, exhibition stands, marquees, sanitation facilities and security barriers.

“With so many events already cancelled and no certainty about when they will be able to start again, our industry is on its knees,” says Jim Winship, Secretary of the Events Industry Forum which represents 26 organisations representing the outdoor events industry. “We urgently need the Government to confirm to local authorities that all event organisers and suppliers to our industry are eligible for the hospitality and leisure grants – that will give an immediate lifeline for many.

“While it is starting to be recognised by some in Government circles that the event industry will be a key player in helping to kick-start the economy again, many will need on-going support until they can get back on their feet. For this they will need further grants and better access to loans without having to give onerous personal guarantees.

“Our industry is one of the sectors that has been completely annihilated by this pandemic and needs urgent support if it is to survive.”

Michael Hirst OBE, Chairman of the Business Visits and Events Partnership said, “The UK has some of the best companies and contractors in the world supplying the needs of its events industry – an industry which will revitalise the Nation’s economy and communities when the crisis is over. This survey clearly indicates that the UK is in danger of losing its capacity and expertise to stage world-class events. Hopefully its findings will underline the desperate need to provide more support to sustain the Industry’s suppliers and contractors until they can start operating again”.

The full survey results can be viewed at

<https://www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com/news/bvep-press-releases/790-a-report-into-the-prospects-for-the-events-industry-supply-chain-during-the-covid-19-industry-shutdown>

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For further information please contact Jim Winship, Secretary of the Events Industry Forum, on 07850 104034 or at [jim@tesa.org.uk](mailto:jim@tesa.org.uk)

## **Notes to editors**

### **About the EIF**

The Events Industry Forum is an informal body which brings together 26 trade and educational bodies to deal with issues affecting the UK outdoor events industry. The Forum also managed and publishes the ‘Purple Guide’ through EIF Ltd. The guide, which was formally published by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) is widely considered the main reference source for good practice in the management and supply to outdoor events.

### Member Organisations

Association of Festival Organisers  
Association of Independent Festivals  
Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations  
Association of Stage Pyrotechnics  
British Air Display Association  
British Pyrotechnic Association  
Business Visits and Events Partnership  
Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity  
Event Hire Association  
Event Supplier and Services Association  
Institution of Occupational Safety & Health  
Local Authority Event Organisers' Group  
Made Up Textiles Association  
National Association of Outdoor Events  
National Caterers' Association  
National Police Chief's Council  
National Traction Engine Trust  
Outdoor Arts UK  
Portable Sanitation Europe  
Professional Lighting & Sound Association  
Rugby Football Union  
The Concert Promoters Association  
The Event Services Association  
The National Centre for Resilience Learning and Development (EPC)  
The UK Crowd Management Association

### **About the BVEP**

The Business Visits and Events Partnership's (BVEP) vision is to support sustainable growth for the United Kingdom's Events Industry. BVEP's mission is to support growth across the entire sector via advocacy, networking, collaboration and a collective voice.

BVEP's objectives are to:

- Operate an umbrella organisation to represent, promote and further the interest of member organisations involved in the United Kingdom Events Industry
- Advance the interests, standing, quality, sustainability and growth of the United Kingdom Events' Industry
- Seek greater collaboration across the Events' Industry sectors on common issues
- Forge close links with Government departments, including devolved Governments where possible via representation that can influence favourable policies towards the Industry. In particular, maintain strong relationships with key sponsoring departments, DCMS, DIT and BEIS
- Seek a stronger link with the Creative Industries and other related sectors
- Encourage joint events
- Increase the focus on professionalism and skills development

### **BVEP Partners**

- ABPCO (Association of British Professional Conference Organisers)
- AEME (Association for Events Management Education)

- Business Travel Association
- Core Cities
- Events Industry Alliance (AEO, AEV, ESSA)
- Events Industry Forum
- EMA (Event Marketing Association)
- EVCOM (Event & Visual Communications Association)
- HBAA (Hotel Booking Agents Association)
- ICCA (International Congress & Convention Association)
- London & Partners
- Meet in Ireland
- NOEA (National Outdoor Events Association)
- PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association)
- PSA (Production Services Association)
- Tourism Northern Ireland
- VisitBritain
- VisitEngland
- Visit Wales
- VisitScotland Business Events